Connecticut River Estuary MPO

Transportation Planning Certification Review Of The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process For New Haven Transportation Management Area

Draft Report
April 2013
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE ........................................................................................................................................... 1
CERTIFICATION ACTION .................................................................................................................... 1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..................................................................................................................... 2
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENDATIONS .................................................. 2
SPECIFIC ITEMS OF DISCUSSION AT THE ON-SITE REVIEW .................................................... 5

Review of Findings from 2009 Federal Transportation Management Area Certification Review .......... 5

ON-SITE REVIEW OBSERVATIONS, COMMENDATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS ............................ 7

Transportation Policy Board and Public Input: .................................................................................. 7
Intermodal Transportation ................................................................................................................. 7
Planning for Pedestrian, Bicycles, and Livable Communities ........................................................... 8
Transit-MPO Coordination .................................................................................................................. 9
Safety Planning / Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Operations .................................... 9
Freight Planning .................................................................................................................................. 11
Building Technical Capacity ............................................................................................................. 12
Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) ....................... 13

Planning Requirements Covered by this Review ............................................................................ 15

Organization, Boundaries, Agreements/Contracts ........................................................................... 15
Boundary ............................................................................................................................................ 15
Agreements/Contracts ......................................................................................................................... 16
UPWP Development ............................................................................................................................ 17
Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development ................................................................................ 18
TIP Development/Approval/Amendments ......................................................................................... 19
Financial Planning .............................................................................................................................. 21
Air Quality ......................................................................................................................................... 22
Project Selection Procedures ............................................................................................................ 24
Outreach/Public Participation ............................................................................................................ 24
Self-Certification ............................................................................................................................... 26
Title VI Update .................................................................................................................................. 26
Management Systems ......................................................................................................................... 27
ITS ...................................................................................................................................................... 27

Appendix A – Agenda for the On-Site Review ................................................................................ 29

Appendix B – Sign-in Sheet for the On-Site Review ......................................................................... 30
Preface

While MAP-21, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141), is currently in effect at this writing as the authorizing and regulatory legislation for federally funded transportation planning activities, the wide majority of the time covered in this review, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005 was the guiding legislation that set forth requirements for statewide and metropolitan transportation planning, following upon the predecessor Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) issued planning regulations on November 14, 2007 implementing SAFETEA-LU requirements governing the transportation planning process. These requirements are presented in 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule. The Metropolitan Planning Regulations are closely tied with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Air Quality Conformity Regulations. The general requirements of periodic review by USDOT of statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes are retained in MAP-21.

The metropolitan planning regulations require that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process conducted in each urbanized area or Transportation Management Area (TMA) with a population over 200,000 no less than every four years. This review includes meeting the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning regulations and, in air quality non-attainment or maintenance areas, evaluation of the process to ensure conformity of plans and programs to the EPA Air Quality Conformity regulations.

Upon completion of this review, FHWA and FTA will jointly Certify, Certify with Corrective Action or Decertify the Metropolitan Planning Process. This is the sixth certification review of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for the New Haven Transportation Management Area (TMA). The first review was conducted on June 20 and 21, 1995, the second on July 23, 1998, the third on September 20, 2001, the fourth on November 3, 2004, and the fifth review was finalized on February 9, 2009 (the first to also include the Connecticut River Estuary Metropolitan Planning Organization (CREMPO). The on-site review was conducted on February 13, 2013 for the CREMPO, representing a portion of the New Haven TMA.

The federal review team conducted a desk review of the major components of the transportation planning process and explored selected components of the planning process and major U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) initiatives in depth during the on-site review. This report identifies recommendations for consideration by the MPO for improvement and also highlights some of the positive practices of the MPO that can serve as examples to other states and planning organizations.

Certification Action

The FTA and the FHWA have determined that the transportation planning process conducted by the Connecticut River Estuary MPO (CREMPO), representing the eastern portions of the New Haven TMA, meets the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning Rule, 23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C and 49 CFR Part 613. The FHWA and the FTA, therefore, are jointly certifying the transportation planning process.
Executive Summary

As a result of this certification review, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration find that the Connecticut River Estuary MPO (CREMPO) and its staff, in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Estuary Transit District, are conducting a transportation planning process that produces valuable transportation planning products using the planning tools currently available.

The CREMPO has an effective process that supports the application of technical innovation and cooperation with local communities to develop solutions to transportation problems and plans to address future regional needs.

Since the previous Certification review in 2009, CREMPO has devoted significant effort to enhancing the value of the metropolitan transportation plan as a useful planning tool for integrating transportation into a broader vision for regional land use and development, environmental protection, air quality, and economic growth, with greater emphasis on incorporation of transit, pedestrian, and bicycle modes into an integrated regional planning program. The metropolitan transportation plan provides effective direction for developing Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects, reflecting consideration of a wide range of multimodal alternatives. CREMPO is working on improving the linkage between the metropolitan plan and the TIP.

The CREMPO planning process is hereby certified in accordance with 23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C [450.443(b)] and 49 CFR Part 613. Noted below are various recommendations and commendations relative to the Region’s planning process.

Summary of Recommendations and Commendations

Recommendations:

- Due to the newly merged status of the MPO, coordination efforts will need to expand to Middletown Transit District and other appropriate organizations within the new geographic scope of the Region. The MPO and partner agencies in the metropolitan planning process should continue to look for opportunities to strengthen coordination, cooperation and resource sharing in the New Haven Urbanized Area.

- The MPO should work to develop a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan within the next two years, so that the needs of active modes in the region can be effectively integrated with transportation plans and projects at the state, local, and regional levels.

- The MPO indicates in its UPWP that transportation system safety and system management and operations are two of the eight planning factors that must be considered. The review team recommends that the metropolitan transportation plan include measurable regional safety and operations goals and objectives and specific policies to support these two planning factors.
within the region. It is also recommended that applicable goals, objectives, and strategies in support of Connecticut’s SHSP should be integrated into the region’s metropolitan transportation plans, as well as the TIP, in order to place safety on par with other planning factors and to provide consistency between the SHSP and the transportation planning process.

- The review team recommends that the MPO consider a more proactive, collaborative, comprehensive, and data-driven approach to transportation safety planning in future updates to its transportation plans in order to identify the most critical opportunities, strategies, and projects to enhance safety in the region.

- The review team highly recommends that the MPO actively participate as a stakeholder and provides input to CTDOT on the development of the next update to and the implementation of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), which is currently underway by CTDOT.

- The review team recommends that the MPO explore additional avenues, resources, coordination, and opportunities to increase the identification of candidate safety projects for funding under the State’s Local Accident Reduction Program. We recommend that the MPO contact the director of the Connecticut Transportation Safety Research Center to ascertain what safety data and resources are available to assist the region in identifying traffic safety needs, strategies, and projects on local roads for inclusion in the region’s transportation plans.

- The review team recommends that the MPO identify projects, strategies, and activities to promote traffic operations and management in its region. Specific highway traffic-oriented operations and management needs and implementation strategies (such as traffic signal timing of existing municipal traffic signal systems) should be identified and strategies and projects should be considered for inclusion in the long range plan, the TIP, and other transportation plans to implement operations improvements in the region.

- A series of recommendations are also available in FHWA/CTDOT’s program report on “Local Agency Traffic Signal Operations and Maintenance” report, dated May 2012, and by reference in this report are also considered recommendations for this certification review. This program report is being provided separately to the MPO by FHWA.

- The review team recommends that the MPO request training in ITS and planning for operations for its region, including training on the use and implementation of the statewide ITS architecture and systems engineering for ITS projects.

- The MPO should continue to integrate freight planning into their regular transportation planning program and coordinate with locally-based shippers and distributors on TMA-wide and statewide freight planning issues to understand the implications to the Region.

- The MPO should continue to take advantage of training opportunities to broaden staff capabilities, especially in light of MAP-21 data requirements for performance management.

- The MPO should explore the feasibility of highway data collection technology and/or transducers for the needs of traffic counting compared to traditional equipment.
• The MPO should explore technical resource sharing with SCRCOG to accomplish TMA-wide tasks.

• GPS and ADL as tools to assist in transit planning should be explored.

• The latest self-certification resolution, which certifies that the MPO is a qualified agency to adopt the TIP, must be included in the TIP document.

• When the Region’s LRTP is updated, and needs are identified through plan development and data compilation/analysis, the MPO should develop projects to address deficiencies, regardless of identified funding sources or unfunded sources.

• The Region should remember to discuss CMAQ project development with freight shippers and carriers.

• While the public involvement process followed for TIP development and production is compliant with regulations, the MPO should consider having informational meetings and public hearings at various locations and times of day that are convenient for the general public. Any public comments received in person or otherwise communicated should be incorporated into the TIP, along with any follow-up communications. If no comments are received, this too should be noted in the public involvement section of the TIP.

• The MPO should continue to identify methods to increase public participation.

• LEP and EJ strategies should follow an updating of demographic mapping based on 2010 Census results.

• The MPO, during the reconstruction of its new website, should consider a focus group to help develop ease of navigation through the site to required elements such as meeting notices, the UPWP, the LRTP, the TIP, and the Public Participation Plan.

• The Region should continue to work with SCRCOG to produce a TMA-wide CMP and should look toward the state for related data such as V/C ratios over or forecasted to exceed 1.0 on state roads to geographically identify regional choke points. Mapping of high crash incident sites could help support that effort to promote improvement projects.

**Commendations:**

• The Review Team commends the MPO and 9 Town Transit for their close, cooperative working relationship and excellent integration of transit into the regional transportation planning process. MAP-21’s requirement that transit be a voting member on MPO boards demonstrates a growing national recognition that transit must play a meaningful role in transportation planning;
The MPO offers an excellent example of how this can be accomplished even in a rural area with relatively limited transit service.

- Discussion during on-site review at the MPO on February 13, 2013 and at SCRCOG on February 6, 2013 revealed that excellent coordination and cooperation exists between these two regions.
- The MPO articulated in its transportation plans its efforts to increase coordination with CTDOT on ITS strategies and traffic incident management along the I-95 and Route 1 corridors in the region.
- The MPO prepared and provided an excellent PowerPoint presentation and handouts to assist the review team during the on-site certification review.
- The MPO has vastly improved the local perspective of freight and the impacts and opportunities presented by this particular facet of the transportation system from the last certification review.
- The Review Team commends the MPO for implementing the recommendations of the Title VI Coordinator.

**Specific Items of Discussion at the On-site Review**

In meeting the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning Regulations set forth in 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have the flexibility to focus their particular planning expertise on the needs that they define for their planning region through the planning process. The purpose of the on-site review meetings and additional public meetings attended by the review team was to assess the technical capability of the MPO staff in meeting these planning needs and their ability to involve members of the public that may be affected by transportation investments in the transportation decision making process. In addition, the review team used these sessions to help assess the multi-modal nature of the MPO planning activities as well as their ability to respond to various DOT initiatives.

The on-site review was held on February 13, 2013 from 9:00 am. to 4:00 pm (the agenda is found in Appendix A). A list of persons who attended the review can be found in Appendix B. The on-site review meeting included a PowerPoint presentation by the RiverCOG Assistant Director, L. Jean Davies, and other MPO staff. The focus of the presentation explained the MPO’s focus of a holistic approach to regional planning that incorporates all elements of the typical array of regional planning topics and how they affect each other in terms of accessibility and mobility.

**Review of Findings from 2009 Federal Transportation Management Area Certification Review**

Integral to the current certification review is a summary of the recommendations addressed since the last certification review.

- Examine freight planning from a more local perspective and consider approaches to further integrate freight at the community level. Collecting and documenting freight data and
information to create a baseline analysis or inventory that will be beneficial in planning for future freight projects. Furthermore, CREMPO is encouraged to join the Statewide Freight Advisory Committee when it begins meeting and participate in FHWA’s monthly Talking Freight Webinars.

- Being predominately a rural region on the outer edge of the TMA, the MPO does not have a direct freight planning connection in the New Haven urbanized area; however, the MPO has identified freight issues in the region and is initiating planning tasks in this area. The MPO has been assembling baseline data on truck traffic counts and bridge data inventories and interaction between boat counts and drawbridge operations. The Statewide Freight Advisory Committee has not yet been formed, but the MPO expressed a willingness to join such committee upon its formation. The MPO has participated in the Talking Freight Webinars.

- Identify public participation opportunities in the written project selection process and post the project selection process on the CREMPO website.
  - This process has been initiated by the MPO and will be updated for the merger with Midstate Regional Planning Agency. The new web site is under construction.

- Maintain a separate list of the “traditionally underserved” groups to send informational material to and adjust this list as populations shift.
  - Such lists were developed and now need to be updated for the 2010 Census and the new enlarged region.

- Attend the FHWA sponsored CMP workshop scheduled for February 2009 and work with FHWA and CTDOT in further developing and documenting the 8-Step Framework of a CMP tailored to CREMPO needs.
  - Workshop was attended by the Region.

- Continue efforts to take advantage of FHWA’s Safe Routes to School program and consider developing a pedestrian safety plan to complement the Bicycle Plan.
  - More outreach was initiated and a successful project was implemented with Essex. A pedestrian safety plan has not been developed.

- Coordinate with SCRCOG in updating the existing TransCAD modeling software or in selecting new modeling software for mutual modeling purposes.
  - The MPO has not been involved in TransCAD modeling software coordination with SCRCOG, due to limited capacity, investment concern, unknown future data needs, and merger activities. The MPO is also involved with the regional incentive grant to develop a high-performance GIS.
• Due to the inability of State Agencies to enter into MOUs the CRERPA will need to instead add language to their UPWP prospectus detailing the roles and responsibilities in regard to air quality planning.
  
  o The MPO has incorporated the UPWP prospectus as the MOU with the CTDOT which outline the roles and responsibilities of the State and the Region regarding the federal requirements of the metropolitan transportation planning program.

**On-site Review Observations, Commendations, Recommendations**

**Transportation Policy Board and Public Input:**

**Board Member Input**

MPO policy board members, representing the member municipalities and the Estuary Transit District, gave input to the transportation planning process and the positive impacts of the recent mergers of the two former regional agencies into a consolidated form. The MPO staff was praised for their work on behalf of the regional aspirations of the members and coordinating the merger of the regional agencies. The MPO staff was commended by board members for improving the shared assets of the towns, and the transit district commended the MPO for providing technical assistance in planning. Some members expressed frustration with federal processes involved with the federal-aid program that involved cumbersome and expensive reporting requirements, reimbursement and project delays and uncertainty connected with reimbursement eligibility.

**Conclusion:**

Coordination from the MPO and cooperation among the member municipalities was apparent. It is important that resource sharing among the agencies and jurisdictions in the New Haven Urbanized Area continue. The MPO has demonstrated continued progress in implementing an effective 3C (comprehensive, coordinated, and continuing) process.

**Recommendation:**

• Due to the newly merged status of the MPO, coordination efforts will need to expand to Middletown Transit District and other appropriate organizations within the new geographic scope of the Region. The MPO and partner agencies in the metropolitan planning process should continue to look for opportunities to strengthen coordination, cooperation and resource sharing in the New Haven Urbanized Area.

**Intermodal Transportation**

Since the 2009 certification review, the MPO has strengthened technical skills and innovation in transit planning. The MPO practices Integrated Access Planning (intermodal transportation planning), taking into consideration all of the elements affected in a holistic planning process.
Planning for Pedestrian, Bicycles, and Livable Communities

Observations:
The region is moving forward on a number of livability initiatives, including planning for active transportation (pedestrians and bicyclists) and transit-oriented development (TOD). The MPO weaves these concepts together with other planning issues through what they call “integrated access planning,” planning that considers many topic areas simultaneously, integrating all modes and imperatives into a cohesive whole.

As of this writing, the MPO did not have a comprehensive regional bicycle and pedestrian plan. The MPO was active in the development of the 2009 Connecticut Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan¹, however; for example, their input led to the inclusion of bike lanes as part of a Route 154 bridge reconstruction project. Nonetheless, the MPO has often found it difficult to coordinate local needs for bicycle and pedestrian access with state control of many key roads. They see a robust regional bike/ped plan as essential to bolstering the case for infrastructure improvements, and hope to develop one in the near future.

Transit-oriented development is still in its early stages in the region, but the MPO is working to educate local communities about the concept and help them implement TOD zoning, village districts, accessory dwelling ordinances, and other transit-supportive land use policies. In the northern parts of the region the MPO is hoping to foster TOD around bus stations, but faces the challenges of low residential densities and infrequent transit service.

The most TOD-ready areas of the region are along the southern coast, where the Metro-North/Amtrak rail corridor and commuter bus services bring travelers and commuters to and from New Haven, New York, and Boston. The Old Saybrook train station is perhaps the most promising TOD hotspot in the region; a project to improve station parking and foster mixed-use development around the station is now going forward after nine years of planning. The MPO played a critical coordinating role in this project, bridging the gap between rail and bus service providers to ensure that the upgraded station lot has a convenient designated bus stop.

Additional recent and upcoming livability-related projects in the region include:

- Village district zoning in Deep River, which already has in place the sewer infrastructure to increase land use densities in its central core (implemented);
- A multi-project coordinated effort to enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections across the Baldwin Bridge and down Route 156 to a public beach/commercial area in Old Lyme (in progress); and
- Accessibility, streetscape improvements, and mixed use at the Bokum Center intersection in Essex, bridging a gap in the key bike link between Chester and Saybrook (upcoming).

Recommendation:

- The MPO should work to develop a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan within the next two years, so that the needs of active modes in the region can be effectively integrated with transportation plans and projects at the state, local, and regional levels.

¹ http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=1390&q=259656
**Transit-MPO Coordination**

**Observations:**

The MPO has a very close working relationship with the Estuary Transit District/9 Town Transit, the primary transit provider in the region. Nine Town Transit is a fairly small operation, providing mostly demand-response service alongside four flexible-route bus lines. Due in part to its small size, 9 Town Transit relies on the MPO for large-scale transportation planning services. Consequently, the two organizations are both deeply involved in every stage of the transit planning process. The MPO provides 9 Town Transit with a blueprint for future growth that fits with regional transportation and land use patterns, and 9 Town Transit has direct access to MPO staff to ensure that its projects are included in the TIP and its concerns addressed.

**Commendation:**

- The Review Team commends the MPO and 9 Town Transit for their close, cooperative working relationship and excellent integration of transit into the regional transportation planning process. MAP-21’s requirement that transit be a voting member on MPO boards demonstrates a growing national recognition that transit must play a meaningful role in transportation planning; The MPO offers an excellent example of how this can be accomplished even in a rural area with relatively limited transit service.

**Coordination with CTDOT** – CTDOT representation related a new emphasis on efficient processes on the part of CTDOT staff in working with the MPOs. Efficient coordination extends beyond the planning bureau to other sections of CTDOT in assisting the Region, and streamlining assistance is improving. The Region was complimented on their maintenance of professionalism and cooperation in their dealings with the CTDOT.

**Safety Planning / Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Operations**

**Observations:**

The following observations were derived as a result of the on-site certification review and a desk audit of the documents provided by the MPO.

The MPO included the below two planning factors in their Transportation Planning Work Program – Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. The MPO indicated that these planning factors must be considered in their metropolitan transportation planning process in accordance with federal regulations.

1. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

2. Promote efficient system management and operation
The MPO identified Transportation Safety and Security and Safe Routes to School Master Projects as two of the important issues in their UPWP for FY 2013 and 2014. System management and operation is not listed as an important issue. However, it is not obvious that system management and operations has been considered at all. For example, the town of Middletown has installed a small traffic signal system, but it is unknown whether the operations and management of this system needs upgrading via a traffic signal timing activity or project.

The implementation of ITS strategies along the I-95 corridor and the deployment of incident management strategies for Route 1 are also listed as important issues for the region under Other Transportation Matters.

The MPO indicates that the “publication of the Connecticut Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) provides a framework for increasing highway safety” in the UPWP. The UPWP indicates that updates are needed to the regional transportation plan to incorporate SHSP updates. However, the UPWP or other transportation plans for the region do not provide safety goals and objectives or how highway safety will be increased in the region. Also, there is no discussion regarding a comprehensive, collaborative, and data-driven approach for transportation safety planning in the region.

With regard to Traffic Congestion and Safety Management, the MPO has identified a major activity for FY 2013 to 2014 in the UPWP involving the coordination with CTDOT on planning efforts for incident management activities and ITS planning along the Route 1 corridor from Old Saybrook to Clinton. Another major activity involves identifying and mapping areas where traffic congestion and speed are safety problems for vehicular drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians on local roads and intersections.

One of the major activities in the UPWP for FY 2013 and 2014 under “Short Project Selection and Programming” is continued participation by the region in submitting applications to CTDOT in response to the annual solicitation for candidate projects for funding under the State’s Local Accident Reduction Program. The Region has submitted only one application to CTDOT in the last ten years. This project was approved by CTDOT in 2010.

FHWA completed a program review in 2012 on traffic signal operations and maintenance involving a number of local agencies in Connecticut. Five observations and recommendations were made in the final FHWA/CTDOT program report that relate to planning for operations. It appears that the MPO has not identified and included regional needs and strategies towards improving efficient system management and operations in its transportation planning program.

**Recommendations:**

- The MPO indicates in its UPWP that transportation system safety and system management and operations are two of the eight planning factors that must be considered. The review team recommends that the metropolitan transportation plan include measurable regional safety and operations goals and objectives and specific policies to support these two planning factors within the region. It is also recommended that applicable goals, objectives, and strategies in support of Connecticut’s SHSP should be integrated into the region’s metropolitan transportation plans, as well as the TIP, in order to place safety on par with other planning factors and to provide consistency between the SHSP and the transportation planning process.

- The review team recommends that the MPO consider a more proactive, collaborative, comprehensive, and data-driven approach to transportation safety planning in future updates to
its transportation plans in order to identify the most critical opportunities, strategies, and projects to enhance safety in the region.

- The review team highly recommends that the MPO actively participate as a stakeholder and provides input to CTDOT on the development of the next update to and the implementation of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), which is currently underway by CTDOT.

- The review team recommends that the MPO explore additional avenues, resources, coordination, and opportunities to increase the identification of candidate safety projects for funding under the State’s Local Accident Reduction Program. We recommend that the MPO contact the director of the Connecticut Transportation Safety Research Center to ascertain what safety data and resources are available to assist the region in identifying traffic safety needs, strategies, and projects on local roads for inclusion in the region’s transportation plans.

- The review team recommends that the MPO identify projects, strategies, and activities to promote traffic operations and management in its region. Specific highway traffic-oriented operations and management needs and implementation strategies (such as traffic signal timing of existing municipal traffic signal systems) should be identified and strategies and projects should be considered for inclusion in the long range plan, the TIP, and other transportation plans to implement operations improvements in the region.

- A series of recommendations are also available in FHWA/CTDOT’s program report on “Local Agency Traffic Signal Operations and Maintenance” report, dated May 2012, and by reference in this report are also considered recommendations for this certification review. This program report is being provided separately to the MPO by FHWA.

- The review team recommends that the MPO request training in ITS and planning for operations for its region, including training on the use and implementation of the statewide ITS architecture and systems engineering for ITS projects.

**Commendations:**

- Discussion during on-site review at the MPO on February 13, 2013 and at SCRCOG on February 6, 2013 revealed that excellent coordination and cooperation exists between these two regions.

- The MPO articulated in its transportation plans its efforts to increase coordination with CTDOT on ITS strategies and traffic incident management along the I-95 and Route 1 corridors in the region.

- The MPO prepared and provided an excellent PowerPoint presentation and handouts to assist the review team during the on-site certification review.

**Freight Planning**

**Observations:**
The MPO is expanding their focus on freight access planning. The MPO has compiled and analyzed boat monitoring, including barge traffic, on the Connecticut River and Niantic River in cooperation with the CTDOT bridge study. Additionally, Interstate 95 freight traffic and rail freight has been analyzed. The
local scale of freight has also been incorporated into GIS enhancement of their geospatial data collection, through state grant. Shoreline commercial and industrial land uses are being inventoried in relation to freight transportation deficiencies. A study of the Valley Railroad facility proposal to extend freight service to the Middletown area was produced recently.

Conclusion:

The MPO has expanded and improved concentration on freight planning in the region, especially in terms of the predominately rural/small town nature of the region and the particular issues pertaining to freight in the region. MPO staff has shown a stronger understanding of freight issues and the implications to economic development, land use and transportation in their integrated approach to regional planning.

Recommendation:

- The MPO should continue to integrate freight planning into their regular transportation planning program and coordinate with locally-based shippers and distributors on TMA-wide and statewide freight planning issues to understand the implications to the Region.

Commendation:

- The MPO has vastly improved the local perspective of freight and the impacts and opportunities presented by this particular facet of the transportation system from the last certification review.

Building Technical Capacity

Observations:

Overall capabilities of the MPO’s staff have been enhanced through improved IT systems during the time between certification reviews. GIS capabilities have been improved and databases have been enriched. The background and education of current staff reflects an increased technical ability and multi-discipline skill sets that fulfills the needs to accomplish the required data compilation and analysis tasks of the UPWP. The MPO is reviewing technical needs for GPS and traffic counters for future tasks. The MPO participates in a variety of training opportunities to enhance capabilities.

Conclusion:

The MPO has updated capacity and capabilities to support increased needs and opportunities to accomplish required tasks of the federal transportation planning program and well as serve their member municipalities better.

Recommendations:

- The MPO should continue to take advantage of training opportunities to broaden staff capabilities, especially in light of MAP-21 data requirements for performance management.
• The MPO should explore the feasibility of highway data collection technology and/or transducers for the needs of traffic counting compared to traditional equipment.

• The MPO should explore technical resource sharing with SCRCOG to accomplish TMA-wide tasks.

• GPS and ADL as tools to assist in transit planning should be explored.

Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

Observations:

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) was adopted in May 2011. The LRTP covers the federally required elements and explores in detail the local issues and opportunities town-by-town. However, the local transportation picture is also analyzed on a regional scale that plans the inter-community access and mobility goals. The MPO met with town staff about transportation issues and their relation to the region and the state, in cooperation with Estuary Transit District. The MPO wishes to strategize at the next update to maximize public input. The MPO met with the towns in the development of the TIP, but there was not much interest locally in TIP development.

Conclusion:

The region has produced a high quality LRTP, but the vision and the goals have not directly translated into TIP projects.

Recommendations:

• The latest self-certification resolution, which certifies that the MPO is a qualified agency to adopt the TIP, must be included in the TIP document.

• When the Region’s LRTP is updated, and needs are identified through plan development and data compilation/analysis, the MPO should develop projects to address deficiencies, regardless of identified funding sources or unfunded sources.

• The Region should remember to discuss CMAQ project development with freight shippers and carriers.

• While the public involvement process followed for TIP development and production is compliant with regulations, the MPO should consider having informational meetings and public hearings at various locations and times of day that are convenient for the general public. Any public comments received in person or otherwise communicated should be incorporated into the TIP, along with any follow-up communications. If no comments are received, this too should be noted in the public involvement section of the TIP.
Title VI Activities since State/Federal Review (Title VI CTDOT 2011 Review Recommendations), including Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Activities and Public Involvement

Observations:

The Certification Review Team analyzed whether the COG was adhering to Title VI regulatory requirements. This included an examination of whether there was a Title VI complaint process available; is the information readily available to the public; is there adequate statistical analysis of the demographics and whether the COG is ensuring the MPOs are conducting and documenting public outreach sessions. It’s important to note, the same criteria was reviewed by CTDOT’s Title VI Coordinator in 2012. The Certification Review team determined that the MPO implemented each of the recommendations as identified by the CTDOT’s Title VI Coordinator. There was a complaint process readily available to the public. The COG is documenting analysis of the population demographics. The MPO reported that in a conference call follow-up with CTDOT, the Region was notified that many of deficient areas from the 2011 review could be accomplished after the planned MPO consolidation.

Commendation:

- The Review Team commends the MPO for implementing the recommendations of the Title VI Coordinator.

Recommendations:

- The MPO should continue to identify methods to increase public participation.
- LEP and EJ strategies should follow an updating of demographic mapping based on 2010 Census results.
- The MPO, during the reconstruction of its new website, should consider a focus group to help develop ease of navigation through the site to required elements such as meeting notices, the UPWP, the LRTP, the TIP, and the Public Participation Plan.

Congestion Management Process

Observations:

The MPO views their role in CMP for the New Haven TMA as one of support for the larger MPO, SCRCOG. The Region identified rail parking as a congestion choke point, and is seeking improvements.

Recommendation:

- The Region should continue to work with SCRCOG to produce a TMA-wide CMP and should look toward the state for related data such as V/C ratios over or forecasted to exceed 1.0 on state roads to geographically identify regional choke points. Mapping of high crash incident sites could help support that effort to promote improvement projects.
Planning Requirements Covered by this Review

Organization, Boundaries, Agreements/Contracts

Regulatory Basis

Federal legislation (23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303) requires the designation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 population. The policy board of the MPO shall consist of (A) local elected officials, (B) officials of local agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (C) appropriate State officials.

This designation remains in effect until the MPO is re-designated. The addition of jurisdictional or political bodies into the MPO or members to the policy board generally does not constitute a re-designation of the MPO.

As a result of TEA-21, 23 USC 134(b)(2) was modified with respect to Transportation Management Areas (TMA). Upon designation of a MPO as a TMA (rather than only when the MPO itself is (re)-designated), the policy board shall be structured to include (A) local elected officials, (B) officials of local agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (C) appropriate State officials. Requirement: The organizational requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations are spelled out in Federal Regulation CFR 23 Section 450.310 (d). This structure is reiterated in MAP-21. To the extent possible there will be one Metropolitan Planning Organization for each urbanized area in the State, designated by the Governor through enabling State legislation. The MPO should have a defined organizational structure.

Observations:

The Estuary Planning Region is made up of the municipalities of Chester, Clinton, Deep River, Essex, Killingworth, Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook. The CREMPO (RiverCOG’s predecessor) was designated as an MPO on September 8, 2003, by the Governor of Connecticut.

Conclusion:

The MPO meets the requirements for organization and designation of 23CFR 450.310 (d), and is cognizant of recent requirements from MAP-21 that will necessitate some by-law modifications.

Boundary

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation 23 USC 134(e) requires boundaries of a metropolitan planning area to be determined by agreement between the metropolitan planning organization and the Governor.
Each metropolitan planning area shall encompass at least the existing urbanized area and the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period; and may encompass the entire metropolitan statistical area or consolidated metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Bureau of the Census. Requirement: CFR 23 Section 450.312 defines the boundary requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

Observations:

The boundaries of the MPO were designated by the Governor and are spelled out in enabling legislation. The MPO consists of nine contiguous municipalities in the Greater New Haven Region. The 2000 Census revised the New Haven Urbanized Area to include the geographic entities that comprise the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency (now Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments). The urban boundary is delineated in the metropolitan transportation plan and the MPO website. The entire TMA is part of the NY-NJ-CT Moderate Nonattainment Area and all member municipalities are entirely within the nonattainment area. Portions of the New Haven urbanized area spread into neighboring MPOs, of which Memorandums of Understanding are in effect.

Conclusion:

The boundaries of the Estuary Region MPO are a contiguous geographic area with a finite boundary.

Agreements/Contracts

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (23 USC 134) requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) work in cooperation with the State and public transportation agencies in carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan planning process. These agencies determine their respective and mutual roles and responsibilities and procedures governing their cooperative efforts. Federal regulation requires that these relationships be specified in agreements between the MPO and the State and between the MPO and the public transit operators:

“The MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) serving the MPA.” 23 CFR 450.314(a)

“If more than one MPO has been designated to serve an urbanized area, there shall be a written agreement among the MPOs, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) describing how the metropolitan transportation planning processes will be coordinated to assure the development of consistent metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs across the MPA boundaries...” 23 CFR 450.314(d)

The regulations also require an agreement between the MPO and any other agency responsible for air quality planning under the Clean Air Act (23 CFR 450.314 (c)).
Observations:

The MPO has Memorandums of Understanding, which help guide the transportation planning process:

1. Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Transportation Planning and Funding – New Haven Urbanized Area – September 11, 2002
2. Memorandum of Understanding between CREMPO, CTDOT and Estuary Transit District – February 2, 2004
3. Memorandum of Understanding between CREMPO and CTDOT – October 17, 2006

Conclusion:

The MPO has a number of MOUs that help to define the planning process. The description of roles and responsibilities in the UPWP now serves as the new MOU between MPO and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), as allowed under a 2004 change in federal regulations.

UPWP Development

Regulatory Basis:

23 CFR 450.308 identifies the requirements for unified planning work programs (UPWPs) to be prepared in Transportation Management Areas. CFR 420.109 governs how FHWA planning funds are distributed to the MPOs. MPOs are required to develop the UPWP in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies [450.308 (c)].

Elements to be included in the UPWP are:

- Discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area and
- Description of all metropolitan transportation planning and transportation-related air quality planning activities anticipated within the next 1- or 2-year period, regardless of funding source or agencies conducting activities, indicating: Who will perform the work, Schedule for completion of the work, and Intended products;
- Include all activities funded under Title 23 and the Federal Transit Act [450.308(b)]

Observations:

As part of the desk review the UPWP was reviewed. The UPWP includes a list of all transportation related activities and issues that the MPO will be involved in over the next two fiscal years, and outlines the challenges faced in the region, in the context of the eight federal planning factors. The UPWP lists the tasks necessary to carry out the objectives of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and elements of the transportation planning process. For each project or activity the MPO outlines the funding sources, products that will be produced, the anticipated work schedule, and sponsoring agencies and participants.

Conclusion:

The MPO meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.308 for the UPWP.
Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development

**Regulatory Basis:**

The requirements for development of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan are spelled out in § 450.322 of 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule.

“The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing no less than a twenty year planning horizon as of the effective date... The transportation plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.” 23 CFR 450.322 The transportation plan is to be updated every four in non-attainment and maintenance areas to ensure its consistency with changes in land use, demographic, and transportation characteristics.

The regulation also identifies a number of required elements that must be addressed in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, including:

- Demand analysis [23 CFR 450.322 (f) (1)];
- Congestion management strategies [23 CFR 450.322 (f(4));
- Pedestrian walkway and bicycle facilities [23 CFR 450.322 (f) (2)];
- System preservation [23 CFR 450.322 (f) (5)];
- Design concept and scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities, in sufficient detail to permit conformity determinations in nonattainment and maintenance areas [23 CFR 450.322 (f) (6)];
- A multimodal evaluation of the transportation, socioeconomic, environmental, and financial impact of the overall plan [23 CFR 450.322 (f) (7)];
- Transportation enhancements [23 CFR 450.322 (f) (9)];
- “A financial plan that demonstrates how the adopted transportation plan can be implemented.” [23 CFR 450.322 (f) (10)]
- Public official and citizen involvement (in accordance with the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316), including participation during the early stages of plan development, availability of document for public review, and at least one formal public meeting in nonattainment TMAs [23 CFR 450.322 (i)];
- Conformity determination in nonattainment and maintenance areas 23 CFR 450.322(l)]

**Observations:**

The MPO updated the metropolitan transportation plan in 2011. As a part of the plan development process, the MPO convened stakeholders, interested parties and government officials to discuss the issues of growth and how they interplay with land use, transportation, and the environment.
Conclusions:

The metropolitan transportation plan is comprehensive and wide-ranging. It was developed with the intention of reaching a large diversified audience, including the public, the environmental agencies and organizations, public and private transit providers, and the freight community. The metropolitan transportation plan meets the requirements of 23 CFR, Section 450.322.

TIP Development/Approval/Amendments

Regulatory Basis:

The MPO is required, under 23 CFR 450.324, to develop a transportation improvement program (TIP) in cooperation with the State and public transit operators. Specific requirements and conditions, as specified in the regulations, include:

“The MPO, in cooperation with the State(s) and any affected public transportation operator(s), shall develop a TIP for the metropolitan planning area. The TIP shall cover a period of no less than four years, be updated at least every four years, and be approved by the MPO and the Governor... The TIP must be compatible with the STIP development and approval process.” [23 CFR 450.324(a)]

- Conformity determination by FHWA and FTA in non-attainment and maintenance areas. [23 CFR 450.324(a)]
- Reasonable opportunity for public comment in accordance with 23 CFR 450.316(a) and, in non-attainment TMAs, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process. [23 CFR 450.324(b)]
- The TIP shall include a financial plan identifying projects that can be implemented using public or private sources. The State and the transit operator must provide MPOs with estimates of Federal and State funds available for the transportation system serving the metropolitan area. [23 CFR 450.324(h)]
- The TIP shall include: all transportation projects, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, proposed for funding under Title 23, U.S.C., including Federal Lands Highway projects, but excluding safety projects funded under 23 U.S.C 402, emergency relief projects, and planning and research activities not funded with NHS, STP or MA funds; all regionally significant transportation projects for which FHWA or FTA approval is required and, for informational purposes, all regionally significant projects to be funded from non-Federal sources; only projects that are consistent with the Transportation Plan. [23 CFR 450.324(c)]
- Information shall be provided as follows for each project included in the TIP: sufficient descriptive material to identify the project or phase; estimated total cost; the amount of Federal funds proposed to be obligated during each program year; proposed source of Federal and non-Federal funds; identification of funding recipient/project sponsor; in non-attainment and maintenance areas, identification of TCMs and sufficiently detailed description to permit conformity determination. [23 CFR 450.324(e)]
- Projects that the State and MPO do not consider to be of appropriate scale for individual identification in a given program year may be grouped by function, geographical area, and work type. [23 CFR 450.324(f)]. In non-attainment and maintenance areas, classifications must be
consistent with the exempt project classifications contained in the U.S. EPA conformity requirements. [40 CFR part 51]

- As a management tool for monitoring progress in implementing the Transportation Plan, the TIP shall identify the criteria and process for prioritizing the implementation of Transportation Plan elements through the TIP; list major projects implemented from the previous TIP and identify significant delays in implementation. [23CFR 450.324(l)(1) and (2)]

- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall describe progress in implementing required TCMs [23CFR 450.324(l)(3)];

Several other regulations govern different aspects of TIP development and implementation:

- 23CFR 450.326 addresses modification of the TIP, stating that the TIP can be modified at any time, subject to the following conditions:

  - In non-attainment or maintenance areas, adding or deleting projects that affect emission levels requires a new conformity determination

  - Public involvement opportunities are provided consistent with requirements for complete information, timely notice, full public access to key decisions, and other relevant provisions.

23CFR 450.326 also governs the relationship between TIP and STIP:

- A Governor- and MPO- approved TIP shall be included without modification in the STIP

- In nonattainment and maintenance areas, a conformity finding by FHWA and FTA must be made before incorporation in the STIP.

- In TMA, all Title 23 and Federal Transit Act funded projects not included in the first year of the TIP as an “agreed to” list of projects (except projects on the NHS and projects funded under the bridge, interstate maintenance, and Federal Lands Highways programs) shall be selected from the approved metropolitan TIP by the MPO, in consultation with the State and Transit operator. [23CFR 450.330 (a)]

- If the State or transit operator(s) wish to proceed with a project in the second or third year of the TIP, MPO project selection procedures must be followed unless expedited project selection procedures formally exist. [23CFR 450.330(a)]

- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, priority will be given to the timely implementation of TCMs included in the applicable SIP. [23CFR 450.330 (e)] requires the publication of an annual listing of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. This list shall be consistent with the categories identified in the TIP.

Observations:

The MPO develops the TIP in coordination with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The MPO makes available the draft TIP for comments from federal and state agencies, the grantor agencies, member towns, the public, private and public transportation providers, neighborhood organizations, and environmental agencies and organizations. The TIP covers at least a four-year period (2012-2015). Projects in earlier years have a more immediate priority than later-year projects. A conformity determination has been made consistent with 23 CFR 450.324(b) and 23 CFR.330(b). Project detail is more than sufficient for analysis and modeling, the latter of which is provided by CTDOT in collaboration with the MPO.
The TIP identifies funding sources, an explanation of the funds, their corresponding eligibility requirements, formulas, and distribution. The TIP includes discussion of the process of TIP development and public involvement. The State is coordinating with MPOs to ensure financial constraint of the TMAs’ TIPs.

**Conclusion:**

The MPO develops and produces a TIP document and process that is compliant with the regulations.

**Financial Planning**

**Regulatory Basis:**

There are two sections of CFR 23 which define financial requirements of MPOs they are Section 450.322(e)(10) and Section 450.324(h).

The provisions related to the Transportation Plan include the following requirements:

- Contain system level estimates of costs and revenue sources that will be expected to operate Federal-aid highways and public transportation
- The MPO, Transit Operator and the State should cooperatively estimate funding sources required to support metropolitan transportation plan implementation
- Include recommendations on other financing strategies
- For nonattainment and maintenance areas, the financial plan shall address the specific financial strategies required to ensure implementation of TCMs in the applicable SIP.

The provisions related to the TIP include the following requirements:

- Includes a financial plan demonstrating which projects can be implemented with current revenue sources and which projects require proposed revenue sources
- Takes into account the costs of adequately maintaining and operating the existing transportation system
- Developed by the MPO in cooperation with the State and transit operator
- Developed with estimates of available federal and state funds provided by the state and transit operator
- Includes only projects for which construction and operating funds can reasonably be expected to be available
- Includes strategies for ensuring the availability of new funding sources
- For the financial analysis, considers all projects funded with Federal, state, local private resources.
- In nonattainment/maintenance areas, only includes projects for which funds are available and committed in the first two years.

**Observations:**

The MPO notes that CTDOT is working on financial constraint of TIPs and the STIP on a coordinated statewide basis.

All projects contained in the TIP are consistent with the fiscally constrained metropolitan transportation plan and the CTDOT 20-year revenue estimate, which serves as the basis for TIP development and fiscal
constraint, was used for the development of the metropolitan transportation plan. The TIP is prepared in cooperation with CTDOT and area transit operators. The TIP for Federal Fiscal Years 2012-2015 is financially constrained to the congressionally authorized funding for FHWA and FTA. The State of Connecticut and the municipalities of the Greater New Haven Region have committed to provide non-federal matching funds. The TIP contains a listing of transportation projects by federal funding categories that will be financed during the 4-year period from 2012 through 2015. The projects listed in the TIP are funded from reasonably expected public resources.

The TIP explains that its projections of reasonably available Federal funds are a portion of the expected authorizations to the State of Connecticut. CTDOT coordinates the TIPs of Connecticut MPOs and the rural regions of the State in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), with projected total statewide funding equaling the expected federal authorization to the State of Connecticut. The majority of the federal funds in the MPO’s TIP will be matched from State funding resources. CTDOT has committed State of Connecticut Special Transportation Fund (STF) resources for this purpose. The TIP states that State resources are sufficiently available to match the costs of projects included in the TIP. Town/city government resources will match a relatively small amount of federal funds. Where local funds are indicated as sources in the TIP, the municipality or sponsoring entity has made a financial commitment to provide the necessary project funds for the match.

The TIP and the STIP, of which the TIP is a part, are financially constrained and the spending plan is based on reasonable projections of available statewide resources. As program and schedule changes are made to the TIP, the total expected federal authorizations and matching funds will be reallocated to reflect total statewide and regional program needs.

**Conclusion:**

The MPO demonstrates financial constraint in both the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP. Statewide coordination of financial planning is reasonably rigorous and assures significant reliability of the MPO’s projections of funding availability.

**Air Quality**

**Regulatory Basis:**

Section 176 (c)(1) of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment (CAA) states:

“No metropolitan planning organization designated under Section 134 of Title 23, United States Code, shall give its approval to any project, program, or plan which does not conform to an implementation plan approved or promulgated under section 110.” The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 subsequently included provisions responsive to the mandates of the CAAA. Implementing regulations have maintained this strong connection. Provisions governing air quality-related
transportation planning are incorporated in a number of metropolitan planning regulations, rather than being the primary focus of one or several regulations. For MPOs that are declared to be air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas, there are many special requirements in addition to the basic requirements for a metropolitan planning process. These include formal agreements to address air quality planning requirements, requirements for setting metropolitan planning area boundaries, interagency coordination, Transportation Plan content and updates, requirements for a Congestion Management Process (CMP), public meeting requirements, and conformity findings on Transportation Plans and TIPs. Sections of the metropolitan planning regulations governing air quality are summarized below:

- An agreement is required between the MPO and the designated agency responsible for air quality planning describing their respective roles and responsibilities (Also see Agreements and Contracts topic area) [23 CFR 450.314 (c)]
- The MPO is required to coordinate development of the Transportation Plan with the SIP development process, including the development of transportation control measures (see Regional Transportation Plan topic area). [23 CFR 450.322 (d)] The MPO shall not approve any Transportation Plan or program that does not conform with the SIP [23 CFR 450.322 (d)]
- In TMAs designated as nonattainment areas, Federal funds may not be programmed for any project that will result in a significant increase in carrying capacity for single occupant vehicles, unless the project results from a CMS meeting the requirements of 23 CFR part 500, subpart E. [23 CFR 450.320 (b)].
- The Transportation Plan shall identify SOV projects that result from a CMP meeting Federal requirements. [23 CFR 450.322 (f) (4)] and include design concept and scope descriptions of all existing and future transportation facilities to permit conformity determinations [23 CFR 450.322 (f)(6)]. The FHWA, FTA, and MPO must make a conformity determination on any new or revised Transportation Plan in nonattainment and maintenance areas (see Regional Transportation Plan topic area). [23 CFR 450.322(l)]
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the FHWA, FTA and MPO must make a conformity determination on any new or amended TIPs [23 CFR 450.324 (a)].
- In non-attainment TMAs, there must be an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process [23 CFR 450.324 (b)]
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall give priority to eligible TCMs identified in the approved SIP and shall provide for their timely implementation. [23 CFR 450.324(i) and 450.330 (b)]
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall include all regionally significant transportation projects proposed to be funded with Federal and non-Federal funds [23 CFR 450.324 (d)] and identify projects identified as TCMs in the SIP [23 CFR 450.324 (e)(5)]. Projects shall be specified in sufficient detail to permit air quality analysis in accordance with U.S. EPA conformity requirements. [23 CFR 450.324 (e)(6)]
- In non-attainment or maintenance areas, if the TIP is amended by adding or deleting projects that affect transportation-related.

In TMAs that are non-attainment or maintenance areas, the FHWA and FTA will review and evaluate the transportation planning process to assure that the process is adequate to ensure conformity of plans and programs in accordance with procedures contained in 40 CFR part 93. Air Quality requirements are spelled out in 23 CFR Section 450.324(a). “In nonattainment and maintenance areas subject to
transportation conformity requirements, the FHWA and the FTA, as well as the MPO, must make a conformity determination on any updated or amended TIP, in accordance with the Clean Air Act requirements and the EPA’s transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93).”

**Observations:**

The metropolitan transportation plan was developed in consideration of the clean air control strategies of the STIP and guidance of CTDOT’s air quality modeling staff and policy and planning section. A conformity determination was made pursuant to 40 CFR 51 or 93 before adoption by the MPO. The conformity determination was made on the TIP consistent with 40 CFR 51 or 93. Project detail is sufficient for analysis and modeling.

**Conclusion:**

The MPO uses an acceptable practice to determine air quality conformity in both the TIP and the Transportation Plan.

**Project Selection Procedures**

**Regulatory Basis:**

Requirement: CFR 23 Section 450, Subpart C – Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Program spells out a comprehensive planning process for MPOs to follow. Generally, the development and selection of projects for funding shall be completed through a comprehensive planning process with local input. Projects should be identified in the Transportation Plan and listed in the Transportation Improvement Program, and be developed through various planning methods.

**Observations:**

The MPO’s project selection process does not rely on a formal criteria and scoring protocol. The MPO coordinates project development with the CTDOT. Historically, the regionally based funding programs have been underutilized, due in part to minimal annual funding totals.

**Conclusion:**

The MPO’s methodology for project selection will need to be developed to reflect a process which tries to assure local buy-in and commitment to project purpose and viability, while still conscious of public input. The focus is to concentrate on regionally significant projects that reflect community and local government support.

**Outreach/Public Participation**

**Regulatory Basis:**

The requirements for public involvement are set forth primarily in 23 CFR 450.316, which addresses elements of the public involvement requirements. Public involvement also is addressed specifically in connection with the Transportation Plan in 450.322(i) and the TIP in 450.324(b).
Requirements related to the planning process generally are summarized in 450.316, as follows:

- A proactive process
- Complete information
- Develop a participation plan in coordination with all interested parties
- Timely public notice of public involvement activities and information about transportation issues and processes
- Full public access to key decisions and time for public review and comment
- Early and continuing public involvement in developing the TIP
- A minimum public comment period of 45 days before adoption or revision of the public involvement process
- Minimum 30-day review period for Transportation Plan, TIP and major amendments in nonattainment areas classified as serious and above
- Explicit consideration and response to public input
- Consideration of the needs of people traditionally underserved by transportation systems, including low-income and minority households; consistency with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1064, including actions necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Periodic review of public involvement effectiveness
- Coordination of metropolitan and statewide public involvement processes
- MPO should consult with other agencies and officials responsible for planning activities such as federal agencies, Tribal governments, transit operators, etc.

The requirements pertaining to the Transportation Plan (450.322(i)) are further elaborated as follows:

- Opportunity for public official and citizen involvement in the development of the Transportation Plan, in accordance with 450.316(a).

TIP related requirements [450.324 (b)] include:

- MPOs must provide reasonable opportunity for public comment in accordance with the requirements of 450.316(a) and, in nonattainment TMAs, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process and provision for public review and comment.

Public involvement in the transportation planning process is a major feature of all federal transportation authorizing legislation. The metropolitan planning regulations state that, “The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs”. To this end, MPOs must develop and adopt a formal public involvement process for planning and program development.

**Observations:**

The Public Participation Plan reflects an effort to be as inclusionary as possible.

**Conclusion:**

The MPO’s public involvement process meets the requirements of 23 CFR, Section 450.316, Section 450.322 and Section 450.324 and provides for significant opportunity for participation by communities and other stakeholders in the planning process.
Self-Certification

Regulatory Basis:

According to 23 CFR 450.334 certification review by FTA and FHWA is required in TMAs, concurrent with the TIP submission, the state and MPO shall certify at least every four years that the metropolitan transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with the following requirements:

- Section 134 of title 23, U.S.C.
- the Metropolitan Planning Regulations,
- Sections 174 and 174 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act,
- Section 1101 (b) of ISTEA (as incorporated in TEA-21) 49CFR part 26 regarding the involvement of DBE in FHWA & FTA funded planning projects.
- The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Observations:

The current TIP, which covers the four-year period from 2012-2015, must include a self-certification by the MPO, in accordance with the applicable regulation.

Conclusions:

The MPO successfully meets the self-certification requirements of 23 CFR 450.334.

Title VI Update

Regulatory Basis:

It has been the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (US DOT) longstanding policy to actively ensure non-discrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI states the “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under a program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Title VI bars intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination (e.g., a neutral policy or practice that has the effect of a disparate impact on protected groups). 23 CFR 450.334(a)(3) requires the FHWA and FTA to certify that the “planning process . . . is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of . . .Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under 23 U.S.C 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794.”

Executive Order 12898, issued in 1994, further amplifies Title VI by providing that “each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” In compliance with Executive Order 12898, the US DOT Order on Environmental Justice was issued in 1997.
Observations:
The MPO presented their responses to the state administered Title VI review.

Conclusions:
Title VI and Environmental Justice activities meet the requirements of 23 CFR 450.334(a)(3); however, the mapping of target population clusters per the 2010 Census needs to be accomplished.

Management Systems

Regulatory Basis:
Under SAFTEA-LU regulations 23 CFR 450.320 a metropolitan-wide congestion management process (CMP) is required for new and existing multimodal transportation facilities in the TMA to ensure safe and efficient use of the system. Performance measures and strategies for congestion management should be reflected in the TIP and metropolitan transportation plan. The congestion management processes should include [23 CFR 450.320 (c)] the following elements:

- Methods to monitor and evaluate the performance of the multimodal transportation system identify the causes of recurring and non-recurring congestion
- Performance measures that are tailored to the locality
- Data collection system coordinated with other data collection efforts
- Congestion management strategies could include:
- Demand management measures
- Traffic operational improvements
- ITS technologies
- Additional system capacities
- Identification of an implementation strategy and funding sources

Observations:
The MPO supports the SCRCOG in operations management activities in the TMA.

Conclusions:
The MPO has a fledgling operations management focus that would benefit from new tasks to study opportunities for planning for operations added to the UPWP.

ITS

Regulatory Basis:
The FHWA Final Rule and FTA Policy on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture and Standards were issued on January 8, 2001, to implement section 5206(e) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). This Final Rule/Policy requires that all ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund and the Mass Transit Account conform to the National ITS Architecture, as well as to USDOT adopted ITS Standards. The Final Rule on ITS Architecture and Standards is published in 23 CFR Part 940.
23 CFR Part 940 states that:

- Regions implementing ITS projects at the time the Final Rule/Policy was issued must have a regional ITS architecture in place by April 8, 2005. Regions not implementing ITS projects at the time the Final Rule/Policy was issued must develop a regional ITS architecture within four years from the date their first ITS project advances to final design.
- All ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund (including the Mass Transit Account), whether they are stand-alone projects or combined with non-ITS projects, must be consistent with the Final Rule/Policy.
- Major ITS projects should move forward based on a project level architecture that clearly reflects consistency with the National ITS architecture.
- All projects shall be developed using a systems engineering process.
- Projects must use USDOT adopted ITS standards as appropriate.

Compliance with the regional ITS architecture will be in accordance with USDOT oversight and Federal-aid procedures, similar to non-ITS projects.

**Observations:**

The MPO was involved in the regional ITS architecture project.

**Conclusion:**

Opportunities to expand ITS involvement, especially in coordination with Estuary Transit District, should be attempted in time for the next review.
Appendix A – Agenda for the On-Site Review

NEW HAVEN

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA (TMA) CERTIFICATION REVIEW

February 13, 2013

CONNECTICUT RIVER ESTUARY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CREMPO)** IN ADMINISTRATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

9:00 – 9:15 Introduction


10:00-10:20 Intermodal Transportation

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning/ Transit Planning and Livability
- Safety Planning

10:20- 10:30 Break

10:30 – 11:00 Intermodal Transportation (continued)

- Discussion with partnering agencies
  - Coordination with CTDOT, CT Transit, Transit District
  - Freight Planning

11:00 – 11:30 Building Technical Capabilities - Future 17 Town MPO

11:30 – 12:30 Transportation Policy Board (PB) and Public Input

- Discussion with PB members and other interested persons regarding CREMPO’s planning process

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch

1:30 – 2:15 Update on Title VI Activities since State/Federal Review

- Environmental Justice & Limited English Proficient (LEP) Activities
- Title VI CTDOT 2011 Review Recommendations
- Public Involvement

2:15- 3:15 Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

Project Selection Procedures

3:15 – 3:30 Break

3:30 –4:00 Congestion Management Process (CMP)
Appendix B – Sign-in Sheet for the On-Site Review

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**CONNECTICUT RIVER ESTUARY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CREMPO)**
* IN ADMINISTRATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

**FEDERAL CERTIFICATION REVIEW**

**PUBLIC MEETING SIGN IN SHEET**

Wednesday February 13, 2013

**LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS OFFICES, ESSEX, CONNECTICUT**

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<th>NAME</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>TELEPHONE</th>
<th>E-MAIL</th>
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